

VZCZCXRO5149
RR RUEHHM
DE RUEHHI #1637 2551701
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 121701Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6340
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH 3688
RHEHNSC/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS HANOI 001637

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR EAP/MLS AND DRL/AWH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KIRF](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST - TRUTH BEHIND INTERNET
STORY

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In contrast to an internet report posted on a Vietnamese-American human rights website alleging that the police broke up an August 30 meeting between Poloff and eight pro-democracy activists in Hanoi, the meeting with only one dissident - Mr. Nguyen Phuong Anh - was held at Mr. Anh's residence without incident. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Mr. Nguyen Phuong Anh is a respected pro-democracy advocate and appears in a group photo of Vietnam's most prominent human rights and democracy dissidents currently being circulated on the Internet. While he is occasionally called in for questioning by security officials, he has never been arrested nor spent time in jail.

¶3. (SBU) When Poloff arrived at Anh's Hanoi residence on August 30, he noticed several plainclothes security officers stationed nearby with cellular camera phones. As poloff walked to the front door, Anh's mother who lives next door approached Poloff before they entered the home and stated that she was paid by MPS officers to protest the visit. She followed Poloff into the home and went to another room.

¶4. (SBU) During the short meeting, Anh did not have any new information to share but said in the past public security officials had been stationed outside his former restaurant and told customers that "it would be in their best interest not to frequent the restaurant of a terrorist." Anh said he now has 50 individuals in his pro-democracy group and added that he invited five members to attend the meeting but that they were prevented by security officials. As poloff left Anh's home for the waiting embassy vehicle he was filmed by public security officers, which is common public security practice for these types of meetings.

¶5. (SBU) On August 31, post received an internet blog from "Women for Human Rights," which is based in California. The attached Vietnamese-language internet report said that Poloff met with "eight pro-democracy activists during the August 30th meeting" and that after half an hour, "police broke up the meeting and escorted all the activists to a local police station."

¶6. (SBU) Comment: During Poloff's August 30 meeting with Mr. Anh there was no interference from public security officials nor was anyone arrested. Indeed, recent meetings with more prominent activists have also gone off without incident despite being monitored by plainclothes security officers either outside the residence or nearby in a hotel lobby. As seen during recent land protests in HCMC, much of what appears on the internet about events in Vietnam is inaccurate, often reflecting a lack of first-hand information and, in some cases, the political agendas of bloggers.

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